Calendar No. 221

108TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION S. 908

[Report No. 108-110]

To establish the United States Consensus Council to provide for a consensus building process in addressing national public policy issues, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 11, 2003

Ms. Collins (for herself, Mr. Dorgan, Mr. Santorum, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Leahy, and Mr. Daschle) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs

July 22 (legislative day, July 21), 2003
Reported by Ms. Collins, with amendments
[Omit the part struck through and insert the part printed in italic]

A BILL

To establish the United States Consensus Council to provide for a consensus building process in addressing national public policy issues, and for other purposes.

- 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
- 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

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2	This Act may be cited	as	the	"United	States	Con-
3	sensus Council Act of 2003".					

4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

- (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—
 - (1) throughout the Nation there is increasing success in the use of collaborative and consensus-building approaches to address critical public policy issues at the national, State, and local levels;
 - (2) there is a need for a national Council that serves the Nation by promoting and conducting consensus-building processes that primarily address legislative policy issues of national importance;
 - (3) such a Council may enroll specific stakeholders, both public and private, to build agreements that ultimately may be implemented by Congress, Federal agencies, or other policymaking bodies;
 - (4) such a Council will strive to create public policy agreements that integrate differing perspectives into highest common denominator solutions;
 - (5) the establishment of such a Council is an appropriate investment by the people of this Nation in a capacity that works in cooperation with Congress and others to assist the current public policymaking processes on selected issues;

- 1 (6) the existence of such a Council could con-2 tribute especially to resolving differences on conten-3 tious policy issues, preventing polarization on emerg-4 ing policy issues and addressing issues of complexity 5 that involve multiple parties and perspectives;
 - (7) the establishment of such a Council may contribute significantly to a renewed sense of civility and respect for differences, while at the same time promoting vigorous interchange and open communications among those with differing points of view; and
 - (8) the Council may become a repository of wisdom and experience on public policy collaboration and consensus-building that can be shared with public and private sector policymakers and the public in the interest of promoting more effective public policy and the increased use of collaborative processes.
- 18 (b) Purpose.—The purpose of this Act is to estab19 lish an independent, nonprofit, national Council to serve
 20 the Nation by seeking to produce consensus on policy
 21 issues of national importance through collaborative proc22 esses.
- 23 SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

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In this Act, the term—

1	(1) "Board" means the Board of Directors of
2	the Council;
3	(2) "Council" means the United States Con-
4	sensus Council established under this Act; and
5	(3) "Director" means an individual appointed
6	to the Board of Directors of the Council.
7	SEC. 4. UNITED STATES CONSENSUS COUNCIL.
8	(a) Establishment.—There is established the
9	United States Consensus Council.
10	(b) District of Columbia Nonprofit Corpora-
11	TION; STATUS; RESTRICTIONS.—The Council shall be es-
12	tablished as an independent nonprofit corporation under
13	the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act (D.C.
14	Code, section 29–301 et seq.). Upon establishment under
15	that Act, the Council shall conform to all the requirements
16	applicable to a nonprofit corporation so established in the
17	District and shall be subject to such oversight by the Dis-
18	trict of Columbia as is applicable to a nonprofit corpora-
19	tion so established. The Council is not an agency or instru-
20	mentality of the United States.
21	(c) Trade Name and Trademark Rights; Vested
22	RIGHTS PROTECTED; CONDITION FOR USE OF FEDERAL
23	Identity.—
24	(1) IN GENERAL.—The Council has the sole
25	and exclusive right to use and to allow or refuse oth-

1	ers the use of the term "United States Consensus
2	Council" and the use of any official United States
3	Consensus Council emblem, badge, seal, and other
4	mark of recognition or any colorable simulation
5	thereof.
6	(2) United states references.—The Coun-
7	cil may use "United States" or "U.S." or any other
8	reference to the United States Government or Na-
9	tion in its title or in its corporate seal, emblem,
10	badge, or other mark of recognition or colorable sim-
11	ulation thereof in any fiscal year only if there is an
12	authorization of appropriations, or appropriations,
13	for the Council for such fiscal year provided by law.
14	SEC. 5. POWERS AND DUTIES.
15	(a) In General.—The Council may exercise the
16	powers conferred upon a nonprofit corporation by the Dis-
17	trict of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act (D.C. Code,
18	section 29–301 et seq.) consistent with this Act.
19	(b) Description of Specific Activities.—
20	(1) In General.—The Council may—
21	(A) develop and conduct processes to build
22	consensus on national policy issues;
23	(B) enter into formal and informal rela-
24	tionships with other institutions, public and pri-

1	vate, for purposes not inconsistent with this
2	Act;
3	(C) identify particular public policy issues
4	as to which the Council's expertise would be
5	useful in building a consensus;
6	(D) subject to paragraph (2), coordinate
7	with, make referrals to and receive referrals
8	from, other conflict or dispute resolution instru-
9	mentalities of the United States, including the
10	United States Institute for Environmental Con-
11	flict Resolution or the Federal Mediation and
12	Conciliation Service; and
13	(E) develop and apply criteria for the pur-
14	pose of determining whether the Council will
15	enter into a consensus-building process on a
16	particular issue.
17	(2) Limitations on Certain activities.—
18	The Council shall consult and coordinate with the
19	United States Institute for Environmental Conflict
20	Resolution and the Federal Mediation and Concilia-
21	tion Service to ensure that the activities of the
22	Council do not—
23	(A) duplicate the activities of the Institute
24	or Service; or

1	(B) interfere with the Institute or Service
2	in carrying out their respective statutory re-
3	sponsibilities.
4	(2) Consultation and coordination with
5	THE INSTITUTE AND SERVICE.—
6	(A) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the
7	term—
8	(i) "Institute" means the United States
9	Institute for Environmental Conflict Reso-
10	lution; and
11	(ii) "Service" means the Federal Medi-
12	ation and Conciliation Service.
13	(B) Limitations on certain activi-
14	TIES.—The Council may not—
15	(i) take any action relating to a mat-
16	ter within the authority of the Institute or
17	the Service without the consent of the Insti-
18	tute or Service, as applicable;
19	(ii) duplicate the activities of the Insti-
20	tute or the Service; or
21	(iii) interfere with the Institute or
22	Service in carrying out their respective stat-
23	$utory\ responsibilities.$
24	(C) Response to request for con-
25	SENT.—The Institute or Service shall respond to

1	a request for consent described under subpara-
2	$graph\ (B)(i),\ not\ later\ than\ 30\ days\ after\ the$
3	date of receiving a request, unless the Council
4	and the Institute or Service agree otherwise.
5	(D) Consultation.—The Council, Insti-
6	tute, and Service shall consult among each other
7	to identify opportunities for collaboration in ful-
8	fillment of their respective purposes and pro-
9	grams.
10	(3) Consensus-building process.—With re-
11	spect to each consensus-building process, the Coun-
12	cil—
13	(A) shall consider such factors as the de-
14	gree of congressional interest in the issue, as
15	well as issue complexity, cost, ripeness, likeli-
16	hood of participation by key stakeholders, and
17	any other relevant indices that may assist the
18	Council in determining whether to enter into a
19	particular consensus process;
20	(B) may identify any appropriate
21	facilitator for the negotiation process;
22	(C) may identify the key stakeholders in-
23	volved or interested in the outcome of a par-
24	ticular issue, including those individuals who

have the authority to implement the rec-

1	ommendations that result from the Council's
2	consensus building processes;
3	(D) may develop and publish a common set
4	of facts to inform and assist consensus-building
5	processes;
6	(E) may establish ground rules, including
7	matters related to confidentiality, representa-
8	tion of counsel, and ex parte communications;
9	(F) may work to promote consensus among
10	the stakeholders by methods such as negotia-
11	tion, discussion, meetings, and any other proc-
12	ess of dispute resolution;
13	(G) may build and construct agreements
14	among stakeholders;
15	(H) may issue a report reflecting the re-
16	sults of consideration by the Council on con-
17	sensus-building efforts; and
18	(I) may provide training and technical as-
19	sistance on any issue within the Council's com-
20	petence.
21	(4) Other activities.—The Council also may
22	engage in any other activity consistent with its mis-
23	sion

1	(c) General Authority.—The Council may do any
2	and all lawful acts necessary or desirable to carry out the
3	objectives and purposes of this Act.
4	(d) Guidelines for Council Operations.—As
5	necessary, the Council shall develop guidelines, through its
6	bylaws or otherwise, to address—
7	(1) policies relating to personal service con-
8	tracts;
9	(2) standards to ensure that the Council, its Di-
10	rectors, employees, and agents, avoid conflicts of in-
11	terest that may arise;
12	(3) fundraising policies, donor development pro-
13	grams, and matters related to the acceptance of pri-
14	vate donations;
15	(4) procedures to ensure that all participants in
16	a consensus-building process are informed of—
17	(A) the sources of funding of the Council;
18	and
19	(B) the source and purpose of any dona-
20	tion for which a purpose is specified when do-
21	nated to the Council;
22	(5) the duties and responsibilities of the Coun-
23	cil, its Board, officers, employees, and agents; and
24	(6) the establishment of advisory committees,
25	councils, or other bodies, as the efficient administra-

1	tion of the business and purposes of the Council may
2	require.
3	SEC. 6. BOARD OF DIRECTORS.
4	(a) Vested Powers.—The powers of the Council
5	shall be vested in a Board of Directors unless otherwise
6	specified in this Act or delegated by the Board.
7	(b) Appointments.—The Board of Directors shall
8	consist of 12 voting members as follows:
9	(1) Four individuals, including private citizens
10	or State or local employees, no more than 2 of whom
11	shall be of the same political party, appointed by the
12	President. The President shall appoint members of
13	the opposing party only on the recommendation of
14	the leaders of Congress from that party. The Presi-
15	dent shall make all 4 of the initial appointments
16	under this paragraph on the same date.
17	(2) Two individuals, including private citizens
18	or State or local employees, appointed by the Major-
19	ity Leader of the Senate.
20	(3) Two individuals, including private citizens
21	or State or local employees, appointed by the Minor-
22	ity Leader of the Senate.
23	(4) Two individuals, including private citizens
24	or State or local employees, appointed by the Speak-

er of the House of Representatives.

1	(5) Two individuals, including private citizens
2	or State or local employees, appointed by the Minor-
3	ity Leader of the House of Representatives.
4	(c) TERM OF OFFICE: COMMENCEMENT AND TERMI-
5	NATION, INTERIM AND REMAINDER SERVICE, LIMITA-
6	TION.—
7	(1) Term of office.—Directors appointed
8	under subsection (b) of this section shall be ap-
9	pointed to 4-year terms, with no Director serving
10	more than 2 consecutive terms, except that—
11	(A) as designated by the President, the
12	terms of 2 of the 4 Directors initially appointed
13	under subsection (b)(1) shall be 2 years, subject
14	to appointment to no more than 2 additional 4-
15	year terms in the manner set forth in this sec-
16	tion;
17	(B) as designated by the Speaker of the
18	House of Representatives, the terms of the 2
19	Directors initially appointed under subsection
20	(b)(4) shall be 2 years, subject to appointment
21	to no more than 2 additional 4-year terms in
22	the manner set forth in this section; and
23	(C) as designated by the Minority Leader
24	of the House of Representatives, the terms of
25	the 2 Directors initially appointed under sub-

1	section (b)(5) shall be 2 years, subject to ap-
2	pointment to no more than 2 additional 4-year
3	terms in the manner set forth in this section.
4	(2) Remainder Service.—Any Director ap-
5	pointed to the Board to replace a Director whose
6	term has not expired shall be appointed to serve the
7	remainder of that term.
8	(3) President of Council.—The President of
9	the Council shall serve as a nonvoting Director of
10	the Board.
11	(d) QUALIFICATIONS.—
12	(1) In general.—A demonstrated interest in
13	the mission of the Council or expertise in consensus
14	building shall be considered in appointments made
15	under this section.
16	(2) Non-federal employees.—No Director
17	may be an officer or employee of the Federal Gov-
18	ernment, including a Member of Congress.
19	(e) Removal From Office.—A Director may be re-
20	placed by the appointing official or may be removed by
21	a process to be established in the Council's bylaws.
22	(f) Meetings; Notice in Federal Register.—
23	Meetings of the Board shall be conducted pursuant to the
24	Council's bylaws, except as provided in the following:
25	(1) Initial organizational meeting.—

- 1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall hold 2 an initial organizational meeting within 60 days 3 after the appointment of at least ½ of the 4 members under this section. The initial organi-5 zational meeting may be held only if equal num-6 bers of members from each of the 2 major polit-7 ical parties are appointed to the Board as of the 8 date of that meeting. The purpose of the meet-9 ing shall be to provide for the incorporation of 10 the Council as a non-profit corporation in the District of Columbia as provided under section 12 4 and to adopt the interim bylaws and guide-13 lines required under this section for its oper-14 ation.
 - (B) REQUIRED RATIFICATION OF ACTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING.—The Articles of Incorporation and the interim bylaws and guidelines adopted in the initial organizational meeting shall be effective only until the first meeting of the Board after the appointment of all members under this section, at which time the articles, bylaws, or guidelines may be ratified or modified by the Board.
 - MEETINGS; QUORUM.—The Board shall meet at least semiannually. A majority of the Direc-

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- tors in office shall constitute a quorum for anyBoard meeting.
 - (3) OPEN MEETINGS.—All official governing meetings of the Board shall be open to public observation and shall be preceded by reasonable public notice. Notice in the Federal Register shall be deemed to be reasonable public notice for purposes of the preceding sentence. In exceptional circumstances, the Board may close those portions of a meeting, upon a majority vote of Directors present and with the vote taken in public session, which are likely to disclose information affecting or relating to the status of individual Directors or employees of the Council or to ongoing litigation to which the Council is a party.

(g) Compensation.—

- (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), a Director may be compensated at a rate not to exceed the daily equivalent of the rate payable for a position at level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, for each day during which that Director is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Council.
- (2) DIRECTORS WHO MAY BE COMPENSATED.—

 A Director may be compensated under paragraph

- 1 (1), if that Director notifies the Board of an election
- 2 to receive compensation.
- 3 (3) Effective date.—A Director shall be
- 4 compensated under this subsection for the perform-
- 5 ance of duties after the date of notification under
- 6 paragraph (2).
- 7 (h) Travel Expenses.—While away from home or
- 8 regular place of business in the performance of duties for
- 9 the Board, a Director may receive reasonable travel, sub-
- 10 sistence, and other necessary expenses.

11 SEC. 7. OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES.

- 12 (a) President of the Council.—There shall be
- 13 a President who shall be appointed by the Board. The
- 14 President shall be the chief executive officer of the Council
- 15 and shall carry out or cause to be carried out the functions
- 16 of the Council subject to the supervision and direction of
- 17 the Board.
- 18 (b) Compensation of President of the Coun-
- 19 CIL.—The President of the Council shall be compensated
- 20 at an annual rate of pay not to exceed the rate payable
- 21 for a position at level II of the Executive Schedule under
- 22 section 5313 of title 5, United States Code.
- 23 (c) Assignment of Federal Officers or Em-
- 24 PLOYEES TO THE COUNCIL.—The Council may request
- 25 the assignment of any Federal officer or employee to the

- 1 Council by an appropriate executive department, agency,
- 2 or congressional official or Member of Congress and may
- 3 enter into an agreement for such assignment, if the af-
- 4 fected officer or employee agrees to such assignment and
- 5 such assignment causes no prejudice to the salary, bene-
- 6 fits, status, or advancement within the department, agen-
- 7 cy, or congressional staff of such officer or employee. The
- 8 assigning office shall be fully reimbursed by the Council
- 9 for the costs associated with such an assignment. The as-
- 10 signed officer or employee shall remain an officer or em-
- 11 ployee of the United States during the course of such as-
- 12 signment.
- 13 (d) Personnel.—The President of the Council, with
- 14 the approval of the Board, may appoint and fix the com-
- 15 pensation of such additional personnel as determined nec-
- 16 essary. The President and employees of the Council shall
- 17 not be employees of the United States.
- 18 (e) Compensation for Services or Expenses;
- 19 Prohibition on Loans to Council Directors and
- 20 Personnel.—
- 21 (1) In general.—No part of the financial re-
- sources, income, or assets of the Council or of any
- legal entity created by the Council shall inure to any
- agent, employee, officer, or Director or be distribut-
- able to any such person during the life of the cor-

1	poration or upon dissolution or final liquidation.
2	Nothing in this section may be construed to prevent
3	the payment of reasonable compensation for services
4	or expenses to the Directors, officers, employees, and
5	agents of the Council in amounts approved in ac-
6	cordance with this Act.
7	(2) Loans.—The Council shall not make loans
8	to its Directors, officers, employees, or agents.
9	SEC. 8. PROCEDURES AND RECORDS.
10	(a) Monitoring and Evaluation of Programs.—
11	The Council shall monitor and evaluate and provide for
12	independent evaluation if necessary of programs supported
13	in whole or in part under this Act to ensure that the provi-
14	sions of this Act and the bylaws, rules, regulations, and
15	guidelines promulgated under this Act are adhered to.
16	(b) Accounts of Receipts and Disbursements;
17	FINANCIAL REPORTS.—
18	(1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall keep com-
19	plete books and records of accounts, including—
20	(A) separate and distinct accounts of re-
21	ceipts and disbursements of Federal funds and
22	donations; and
23	(B) records of the purpose of any donation
24	for which a purpose is specified when donated
25	to the Council.

1	(2) ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORTS.—The Coun-
2	cil's annual financial report shall identify the use of
3	all funding and shall present a clear description of
4	the full financial situation of the Council.
5	(e) Minutes of Proceedings.—The Council shall
6	keep minutes of the proceedings of its Board and of any
7	committees having authority under the Board.
8	(d) RECORD AND INSPECTION OF REQUIRED
9	ITEMS.—
10	(1) In general.—The Council shall keep a
11	record of—
12	(A) the names and addresses of its Direc-
13	tors, copies of this Act, and any other Act relat-
14	ing to the Council;
15	(B) all Council bylaws, rules, regulations,
16	and guidelines;
17	(C) required minutes of proceedings;
18	(D) all applications and proposals and
19	issued or received contracts and grants; and
20	(E) financial records of the Council.
21	(2) Inspection.—All items required by this
22	subsection may be inspected by any Director or any
23	agent or attorney of a Director for any proper pur-
24	pose at any reasonable time.

1	(e) Audits.—The accounts of the Council shall be
2	audited annually in accordance with generally accepted au-
3	diting standards by independent certified public account-
4	ants or independent licensed public accountants, certified
5	or licensed by a regulatory authority of a State or other
6	political subdivision of the United States. The audit shall
7	be conducted at the place or places where the accounts
8	of the Council are normally kept. All books, accounts, fi-
9	nancial records, files, and other papers, things, and prop-
10	erty belonging to or in use by the Council and necessary
11	to facilitate the audit shall be made available to the person
12	or persons conducting the audit, and full facilities for
13	verifying transactions with the balances or securities held
14	by depositories, fiscal agents, and custodians shall be af-
15	forded to such person or persons.
16	(f) Annual Report to Congress; Copies for
17	Public.—
18	(1) In general.—The Council shall provide a
19	report to the President and to each House of Con-
20	gress not later than 6 months following the close of
21	the fiscal year for which the audit is made.
22	(2) Contents.—Each report under this sub-
23	section shall include—
24	(A) a statement of the Council's activities
25	for the prior year;

1	(B) a copy of the audit report prepared
2	under subsection (e); and
3	(C) a disclosure statement of—
4	(i) the source of all funds received by
5	the Council in the prior year; and
6	(ii) the purpose for which the funds
7	were contributed or made available.
8	(3) Public availability.—Each report under
9	this subsection shall be made available to the public.
10	(g) GAO REVIEW.—The annual report submitted
11	under subsection (f) shall be submitted simultaneously to
12	the General Accounting Office for its review.
13	SEC. 9. PROHIBITION ON LOBBYING ACTIVITIES.
13 14	SEC. 9. PROHIBITION ON LOBBYING ACTIVITIES. (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—
14	(a) Definitions.—In this section—
14 15	(a) Definitions.—In this section— (1) the terms "covered executive branch offi-
14 15 16	(a) Definitions.—In this section—(1) the terms "covered executive branch official", "covered legislative branch official", and "cli-
14 15 16 17	(a) Definitions.—In this section— (1) the terms "covered executive branch official", "covered legislative branch official", and "client" have the meanings given under section 3 of the
14 15 16 17	(a) Definitions.—In this section— (1) the terms "covered executive branch official", "covered legislative branch official", and "client" have the meanings given under section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1602);
14 15 16 17 18	 (a) Definitions.—In this section— (1) the terms "covered executive branch official", "covered legislative branch official", and "client" have the meanings given under section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1602); (2) the term "lobbying activities" has the
14 15 16 17 18 19 20	(a) Definitions.—In this section— (1) the terms "covered executive branch official", "covered legislative branch official", and "client" have the meanings given under section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1602); (2) the term "lobbying activities" has the meaning given under section 3(7) of the Lobbying
14 15 16 17 18 19 20	(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section— (1) the terms "covered executive branch official", "covered legislative branch official", and "client" have the meanings given under section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1602); (2) the term "lobbying activities" has the meaning given under section 3(7) of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1602(7)), except

1	(A) has the meaning given under para-
2	graph (8) of section 3 of the Lobbying Disclo-
3	sure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1602(8)), except
4	that a communication made on behalf of a cli-
5	ent referred to under subparagraph (A) of that
6	paragraph shall apply instead to a communica-
7	tion made on behalf of the Council; and
8	(B) does not include a communication be-
9	tween the Council and a covered executive
10	branch official or covered legislative branch offi-
11	cial relating to—
12	(i) appropriations for the Council; or
13	(ii) proposed legislation directly af-
14	feeting the Council.
15	(b) Prohibitions.—The Council may not—
16	(1) engage in lobbying activities; or
17	(2) be a client.
18	SEC. 10. FUNDING.
19	(a) Authorization of Appropriations.—For the
20	purpose of carrying out this Act, there are authorized to
21	be appropriated \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2003 and such
22	sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2004 through
23	2008.

- 1 (b) AVAILABILITY.—Funds appropriated under the
- 2 authority of subsection (a) shall remain available until ex-
- 3 pended.
- 4 (c) Availability of Funds From Fiscal Year
- 5 2003.—Any funds authorized to be made available
- 6 through the General Services Administration during fiscal
- 7 year 2003 for the purpose of carrying out this Act shall
- 8 remain available until expended.
- 9 (d) Investment of Funds.—Funds appropriated to
- 10 the Council shall be invested only in instruments backed
- 11 by the full faith and credit of the United States or in a
- 12 federally insured financial institution. Any interest earned
- 13 on such investments shall be used only for the purposes
- 14 set out in this Act.

15 SEC. 11. DISSOLUTION OR LIQUIDATION.

- 16 Upon dissolution or final liquidation of the Council,
- 17 all funds appropriated by the United States to the Council
- 18 including any interest attributable to such funds, but not
- 19 any other funds, shall revert to the United States Treas-
- 20 ury. Other funds held by the Council shall be handled
- 21 under the laws of the District of Columbia applicable to
- 22 nonprofit corporations.

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